

Claims

- Patent*)
1. A presence management system suitable for use in a multiple access communications network; by watching parties and watched parties, said presence management system comprising:-
    - (i) **a** first input arranged to receive notification requests from watching parties in use, each notification request being in respect of a watched party, and at least one of said parties comprising a plurality of individuals;
    - (ii) **a** second input arranged to receive information about events occurring in said multiple access communications system ;
    - (iii) **a** processor arranged such that in use, when information about an event relating to a particular watched party is received, any watching parties who made notification requests about that particular watched party, are notified about the event.
  2. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said at least one party is a watching party.
  3. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said at least one party is a watched party.
  4. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least one of said parties is an automated service.
  5. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said at least one party comprising a plurality of

individuals, is arranged to be modified by one individual only.

6. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said presence management system is further

5 arranged to provide information about the geographical location of a watched party in use, on the basis of said received information about events that occur in said multiple access communications network.

7. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1

10 wherein said presence management system is further arranged to provide information about the current activity of a watched party, on the basis of said received information about events that occur in said multiple access communications network.

15 8. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said presence management system is arranged to provide information about types of connection that a watched party is able to participate in.

9. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 which 20 is arranged to provide information about a change in the availability of a group of watched parties, only when a threshold number of members of said group of individuals have undergone a change in availability.

10. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1  
25 wherein said store of watched party information comprises watched party connection preferences.

11. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 that  
is arranged to provide a connection address for that  
watched party.
12. A presence management system as claimed in claim 11  
5 wherein said connection address is only operable for a  
limited time.
13. A presence management system as claimed in claim 12 which  
is further arranged such that the request from the  
watching party is forwarded to the connection address  
10 provided, in such a way that the watching party has no  
access to that connection address.
14. A presence management system as claimed in claim 1 and  
wherein a plurality of said events are initiated by  
watched parties and comprise a communication via said  
15 multiple access network.
15. A computer program stored on a computer readable medium,  
said computer program being adapted to control a presence  
management system, said presence management system being  
suitable for use in a multiple access communications  
20 network by watched parties and watching parties, said  
computer program being arranged to control said presence  
management system such that:-
- (i) notification requests are received from watching parties,  
each notification request being in respect of a watched  
25 party, and at least one of said parties comprising a  
plurality of individuals;

- (ii) information is received about events occurring in said multiple access communications system; and
- (iii) when information about an event relating to a particular watched party is received, any watching parties who made notification requests about that particular watched party, are notified about the event.

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16. A multiple access communications network comprising a presence management system, for use by watching parties and watched parties, said presence management system comprising:-

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- (i) **A** first input arranged to receive notification requests from watching parties in use, each notification request being in respect of a watched party, and at least one of said parties comprising a plurality of individuals;
- (ii) **A** second input arranged to receive information about events occurring in said multiple access communications system;
- (iii) **A** processor arranged such that in use, when information about an event relating to a particular watched party is received, any watching parties who made notification requests about that particular watched party, are notified about the event.

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17. A method of operating a presence management system suitable for use in a multiple access communications

network, said presence management system being for use by watching parties and watched parties, at least one of said parties comprising a plurality of individuals, said method comprising the steps of:-

- 5 (i) receiving notification requests from watching parties in use, each notification request being in respect of a watched party;
- (ii) receiving information about events that occur in said multiple access communications network, said events relating to said watched parties; and
- 10 (iii) when information about an event relating to a particular watched party is received, notifying any watching parties who made notification requests about that particular watched party, about the event.
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